Past Pursuits

A Newsletter of the Special Collections Division Akron-Summit County Public Library

Volume 19 Number 1 Spring 2020

Summit's Cycling Clubs

by Cheri Goldner, Librarian

Long before LeBron James began planning the inaugural King for Kids Bike-a-thon in 2005 or U.S. Rep. John F. Seiberling hopped on a bike in his suit and tie for the opening of the Akron Metropolitan Park District's first hike and bike trail in 1972, Summit County had an active cycling subculture well documented by local newspapers and city directories.

The first vehicles called "bicycles" were the "high wheelers" or "penny-farthings" that became popular in the 1870s and 1880s. The name "penny-farthings" came from the two British coins, the first of which was larger than the second. The bicycles were expensive, costing up to $125 (the equivalent of over $3,000 today), and their novelty made them newsworthy. The papers covered a wide variety of activities of local "wheelsmen" including who had purchased a new bicycle, detailed proceedings of club meetings, club "runs" to nearby towns, and race results.

Cycling was not just for those participants who could afford the high wheelers, though. It was also a spectator event. In its October 13, 1880 write-up of the Summit County Agricultural Society fair, the *Summit County Beacon* noted that "the bicycle race between Ed. Miller of Akron, and Will. H Wetmore, of Cuyahoga Falls, was won by the latter in 2:12 and 2:08½." A report on the Society's annual meeting in

Members of the Akron Bicycle Club in 1885. Photo from the Summit County Historical Society Collection, Summit Memory.

the January 26, 1881 *Beacon* shows a line item for bicycle races in the treasurer's report.

News of bicycles and bicycle clubs became more common in 1882. An article in that year's May 10 *Beacon* named five local men among the "happy owners of 'wheels,'" identifying the specific bike each owned and stating that as soon as several others ordered their bikes, "a Bicycle Club will be organized for mutual instruction and contests." Among the "Local Notes" in the May 24 *Beacon* was one stating that Howell S. King "last week ordered one of the finest Columbia bicycles. This insures the Bicycle Club." The writer was correct, as articles and ads about the 1882 fair mention the "new feature" of "bicycle contests" by the newly formed Akron Bicycle Club.

The club got serious the following year, with an article in the May 23, 1883 *Beacon* reporting it had adopted a constitution and by-laws and designed their "suits"— "a dark green coat and knee breeches…dark red bicycle stockings, bicycle shoes, cap of the same material and color as the suit, and a light Yale shirt." That summer, reports of club rides and races started to appear more regularly. This one from July 11, 1883, is

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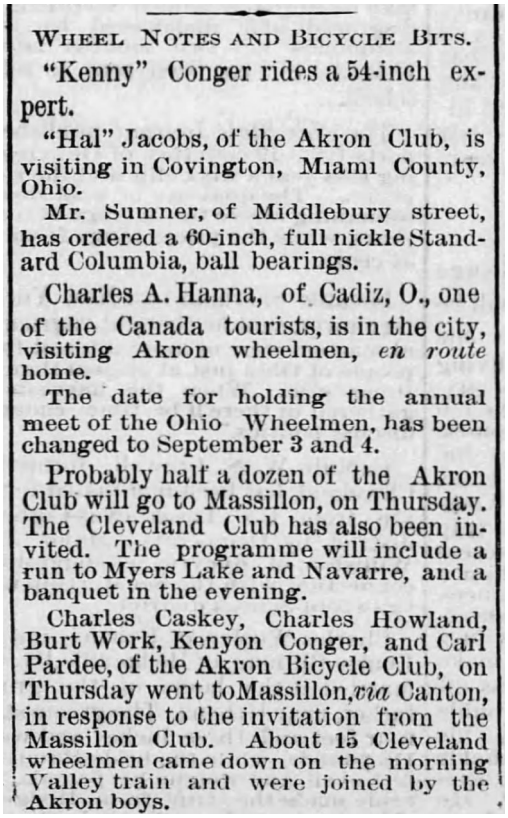


WHEEL NOTES AND BICYCLE BITS.

"Kenny" Conger rides a 54-inch expert.

"Hal" Jacobs, of the Akron Club, is visiting in Covington, Miami County, Ohio.

Mr. Sumner, of Middlebury street, has ordered a 60-inch, full nickle Standard Columbia, ball bearings.

Charles A. Hanna, of Cadiz, O., one of the Canada tourists, is in the city, visiting Akron wheelmen, *en route* home.

The date for holding the annual meet of the Ohio Wheelmen, has been changed to September 3 and 4.

Probably half a dozen of the Akron Club will go to Massillon, on Thursday. The Cleveland Club has also been invited. The programme will include a run to Myers Lake and Navarre, and a banquet in the evening.

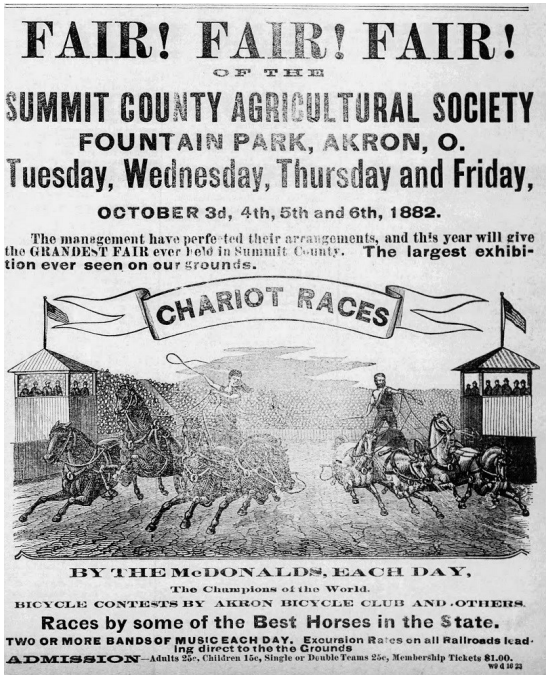
Charles Caskey, Charles Howland, Burt Work, Kenyon Conger, and Carl Pardee, of the Akron Bicycle Club, on Thursday went to Massillon, *via* Canton, in response to the invitation from the Massillon Club. About 15 Cleveland wheelmen came down on the morning Valley train and were joined by the Akron boys.

Activities of local cyclists from the Summit County Beacon*, July 25, 1883.*

typical: "Grant Merriam, Charles Howland, Clarence Howland, Charles Caskey, Bert Work, Ira Morrison, of the Bicycle Club, and William Sawyer went to Medina, riding nearly the entire distance on their wheels. Carl Pardee and Ad. Farrah went by rail. Clarence Howland won the first prize in the mile race. The boys report the roads are good and had a splendid time."

For some cyclists, such as brothers Charles E. and Clarence Howland, cycling became more than a hobby and was part of their livelihood. City directories listing the Akron Bicycle Club in the "Miscellaneous Societies" section show the brothers to have held various club offices (secretary, captain, bugler, etc.) over the years. Starting in 1883, directories also list Howland Bros. as dealers of bicycles and tricycles at 125 West Exchange Street, the location of the Thomas Phillips & Co. paper mill that employed both brothers. The brothers built the Columbia Rink on South Main Street next to the city building in May of 1885, naming it after their favorite bicycle and opening it with "an exhibition of fancy bicycle riding on Star bicycles, which have the small wheel before the large one." They briefly moved their bicycle sales to that location as well.

The Howlands were not the only cycling enthusiasts who mixed business with pleasure. Henry D. Tolley was an assistant city engineer who became active in cycling a few years after the Howlands and alternated hosting meetings at the city building and in his shop, the Akron Cycle Co. on the corner of Mill and High Streets. Under Tolley's leadership, the club reorganized and hosted their largest event, a lantern parade through the downtown streets on September 25, 1891 that drew more than 200 area cyclists and "an immense mass" of spectators. When Tolley didn't receive a raise in 1892, he resigned his position with the city to devote all of his attention to the shop and cycling.


FAIR! FAIR! FAIR!
OF THE
SUMMIT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY
FOUNTAIN PARK, AKRON, O.
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday,
OCTOBER 3d, 4th, 5th and 6th, 1882.
The management have perfected their arrangements, and this year will give the GRANDEST FAIR ever held in Summit County. The largest exhibition ever seen on our grounds.
CHARIOT RACES
BY THE McDONALDS, EACH DAY,
The Champions of the World.
BICYCLE CONTESTS BY AKRON BICYCLE CLUB AND OTHERS.
Races by some of the Best Horses in the State.
TWO OR MORE BANDS OF MUSIC EACH DAY. Excursion Rates on all Railroads leading direct to the Grounds
ADMISSION—Adults 25c, Children 15c, Single or Double Teams 25c, Membership Tickets $1.00.

Bicycle contests were a feature of the Summit County Agricultural Society Fair. Summit County Beacon*, September 20, 1882.*

Tolley and his fellow Akron Bicycle Club members rode and raced along with members from similar local clubs—the C. E. Bicycle Club, an Enterprise Bicycle Club with five members from Buchtel College, a YMCA cycling group, and the Tip Top Cycling Club, hosts of the 1897 Labor Day races at Fountain Park. They also took turns hosting and being hosted by groups in nearby communities with active clubs like Cuyahoga Falls, Cleveland, Canton, Elyria, Massillon, Medina, and Mahoning County.

Bicycles and cycling have changed a lot since Summit County's earliest wheelmen first gathered to ride together, but local cycling culture is alive and well. The current Akron Bicycling Club was formed in 1965 and organizes group rides and races for cyclists of all types and abilities. The Summit Freewheelers is a bicycle road-racing club that sponsors a variety of races in the area, including the popular Eastern Ohio Time Trials on State Route 14 in Deerfield, and Akron BMX provides riders a chance to train and race bicycle motocross in the shadow of the air dock. If organized rides or races aren't for you, you can always follow Seiberling's foot pedals and hop on the towpath for a leisurely spin.

Akron Beacon Journal, *October 16, 1977.*

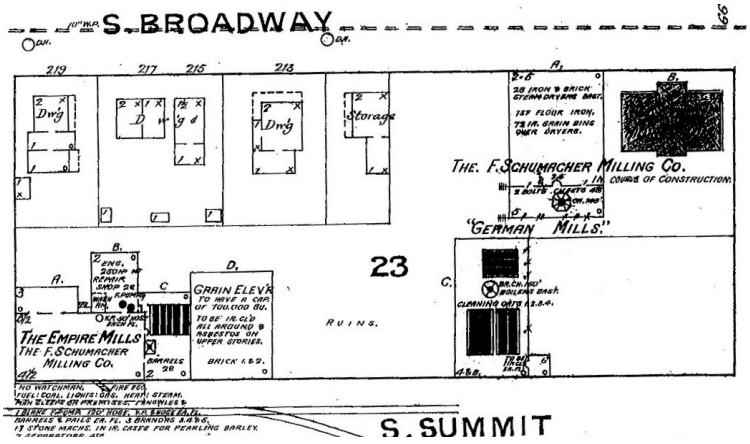
Getting to Know...William Heston

by Jane Gramlich, Librarian

The Quaker Oats Company holds a high profile as one of the largest and best-known industries in Akron's history. The familiar snowy-haired, rosy-cheeked, friendly face that is its trademark still smiles at us today from our grocery store shelves and kitchen cupboards. Yet the details behind the trademark and one of the men who created it is just as important to our city's heritage, as well as to northeast Ohio's genealogical landscape. William Heston was an Akron resident and employee of Ferdinand Schumacher whose story and singular contribution to American culture hasn't received the attention it should. Who was the man behind the Quaker Oats Man?

What's commonly known about the creation of the trademark is limited to two books: *The History of the Quaker Oats Company* by Harrison John Thornton (1933) and Arthur Marquette's *Brands, Trademarks and Good Will: The Story of the Quaker Oats Company* (1967). In 1877, William Heston joined business partner Henry Seymour in a new cereal mill in Ravenna, the Quaker Mill Company, to rival Schumacher's mills in Akron. On September 4 of that year, the U.S. Patent Office recorded Trademark 5118, a plain gray image "of a man in Quaker garb." Thornton wrote that Seymour claimed to have been inspired first by finding an article on the Society of Friends in an encyclopedia. On the other hand, Heston said that as he was walking through Cincinnati, he saw a picture of William Penn, "whose...character at once suggested an admirable name." Thornton nodded toward Seymour's account, but added, "it is a telling point in Heston's favor that he came of Quaker ancestry." Thornton offered no further explanation, and later, Marquette nearly eliminated Heston's role, calling the genealogical motivation "doubtful" without explaining why. Today, Heston and Seymour are equally credited for the trademark, and there's almost no mention of Heston's family background. But it's been there all along.

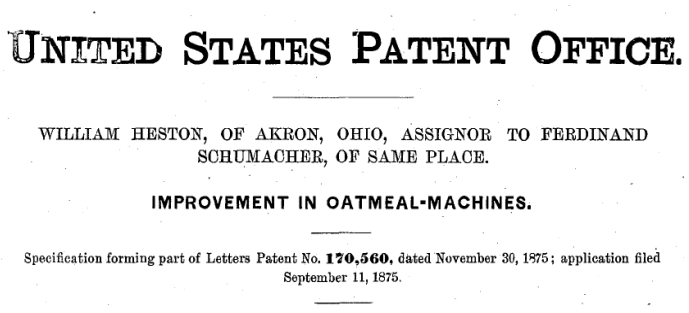
William Heston was born about 1833, most likely in Euclid Township, Cuyahoga County. The 1830 U.S. federal census shows two Abner Hestons, Jr. and Sr., as residents of Euclid. Evidence from a combination of censuses, tax records, deeds, vital records, and published works point to these men as William Heston's father and grandfather. In turn, the line can be tied in to a late nineteenth-century family history, *Record of the Family of Zebulon Heston and His Wife Dorothy Heston, Who Settled in America about the Year 1684.* Originating in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, the Hestons are a well-documented Quaker family thanks to the detailed vital records kept by the Society of Friends. Abner Heston Sr., born about 1766, migrated to Loudoun County, Virginia and married Mercy Vickers about 1787. The couple was eventually disowned by the Friends long before they migrated to Washington County, Pennsylvania and then to Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Abner Heston Jr. and his wife Rachel Rush moved to Bedford Township after purchasing land there in 1837. A variety of documents including vital and cemetery records combine to give evidence for several sons, including William, the youngest.



Sanborn Fire Insurance map for Akron in 1886, showing Heston's former home at 213 South Broadway.

An inventor at heart, by 1862 Heston was filing patents for various kinds of machinery. Married to the former Emma Jones in 1864, he was probably looking for a way to support a family and leave farming behind. In 1870 he was still living in Bedford, listed as a machinist with Emma and two children. At some point he encountered Akron industrialist Ferdinand Schumacher. It's not known

how the two met, but there's one intriguing clue. When Schumacher arrived in Ohio, he didn't immediately settle in Akron; he can be found in Euclid in the 1850 U.S. census. Cuyahoga County deeds and Schumacher's obituary combine to confirm that he purchased land in the township with his brother Otto Schumacher. This could easily have put him in contact with the Heston family. By 1873, Willliam Heston had moved to Akron to work for Schumacher. City directories show his occupation as an engineer at the German Mills with his residence just steps away at 213 South Broadway.



UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM HESTON, OF AKRON, OHIO, ASSIGNOR TO FERDINAND SCHUMACHER, OF SAME PLACE.

IMPROVEMENT IN OATMEAL-MACHINES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **170,560**, dated November 30, 1875; application filed September 11, 1875.

Image from the USPTO Patent Full-Text and Image Database.

The association between Heston and Schumacher wasn't to last, for Heston had ideas of his own. While working at the German Mills, he pursued other interests including incorporating the Heston Packing Company and improving the process for milling oats. On September 11, 1875, he filed a patent titled "Improvement in Oatmeal-Machines," which he assigned to Schumacher with the caveat that he could use the invention in any mill in which he had an interest. Within a couple of years he did just that, breaking away from Schumacher and partnering with Henry Seymour in Ravenna. The Quaker Mill Company struggled, however, and it was soon purchased by Henry Parsons Crowell. Crowell turned his attention to Schumacher and eventually outdid him, acquiring his mills and rebranding them. In 1901, the Quaker Oats Company was incorporated, its name and trademark intact from Schumacher's former rival.

Once Heston severed ties with Schumacher, he had no reason to stay in Akron. By 1880 he was in nearby Alliance, and he later relocated just outside Pittsburgh in Munhall Terrace. He died there on June 9, 1903 at the age of 70. His obituaries in the Pittsburgh *Gazette* and the Homestead *News-Messenger* say nothing about his contribution to Quaker Oats, focusing instead on his career as a manufacturer and his invention for the Homestead Valve Manufacturing Company as a significant achievement. Heston left his wife and four daughters. He was brought back to Ohio to be buried in Bedford Cemetery along with much of his family.

A little research goes a long way with William Heston. There's certainly more to him than his disagreement with Seymour. In addition, the ancestry so quickly glossed over by Thornton and Marquette—and virtually forgotten today—isn't just a vague concept; it is rooted in identifiable Ohio residents. It's possible to point to the real people Heston likely had in mind when he thought of his lineage. He may not have been able to name them all, but we can—the Heston families of Bedford and Euclid and their long stretch back to Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Though his time in Akron was short, his mark was indelible. Whether it was intended or not, a local genealogical connection is a tangible part of the beginning of the Quaker Oats Company, making its history that much richer—and William Heston's role in it that much more compelling.

For more on William Heston's Quaker lineage and the Heston family of Cuyahoga County, see "Out of the Unity of Friends: The Remarkable Legacy of Abner and Mercy Heston" by Jane Dempsey Gramlich, Ohio Genealogical Society Quarterly, *Vol. 51 No. 1, Spring 2011.*

Save the Date: Maureen Taylor on July 25

Join the Special Collections Division and the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society on Saturday, July 25, 9:30 am-4 pm in the Main Library Auditorium for an exciting all-day program, "Managing Your Family Photographs" featuring Maureen Taylor, the Photo Detective®. Maureen will cover identifying, preserving, and sharing family photos and will have her books available for sale. Check out our Events Calendar for more information. Register by phone, in person, or online.

OHIO OBITUARY INDEX
BROUGHT TO YOU BY
RUTHERFORD B. HAYES
FERD. SCHUMACHER
GOES TO HIS REWARD
Great Captain of Industry and "Oatmeal King," Who Originated Akron's Milling Enterprises, Unexpectedly Succumbs at a Ripe Old Age—Was One of the City's Best Citizens and Most Hel pful Men
Record Detail
Basic Information

Entry of Historic ABJ Citations into Ohio Obituary Index Now Complete

by Cheri Goldner, Librarian

In January of 2013, the Library joined the Hayes Research Library's Ohio Obituary Index online database as a way to provide greater access to *Akron Beacon Journal* obituaries. Rather than simply producing a list of names and obituary dates to put on our shelves or publish on our website, staff began creating records in the online database. This has allowed us to record additional information such as the names of parents and spouses, age at time of death, and dates of birth, marriage and death and has helped us reach a much wider audience. With more than 70 contributing libraries and more than 3.8 million database entries, the Ohio Obituary Index is a popular source among Ohio genealogy researchers, and its inclusion in Ancestry.com and Ancestry Library Edition has extended our reach even further.

In addition to entering data from current obituaries, we also decided to add the obituary citations from the Akron Beacon Journal (ABJ) newspaper indexes, 1841-1939 and the Obituary only indexes, 1937-2012 available on our website in PDF. This part of the project would still be going on for many more years to come had it not been for the assistance of staff members from other agencies and the dedication of an incredible group of volunteers who have devoted thousands of hours of work creating and editing database records from home over the past seven years.

The indexing work is not done—we are considering our next steps, perhaps using our microfilm of other local newspapers such as the *Cuyahoga Falls Reporter* and *Akron Times-Press* to add citations from those newspapers—but the completion of the historic ABJ entries is a huge achievement. ABJ entries now number nearly 1.3 million records and comprise about a third of the total entries in the Ohio Obituary Index. For that, we owe the following 42 volunteers a great big THANK YOU!

(** Denotes volunteers who have added more than 50,000 records.*)

Hollie Ashworth
Shawn Barnhart
Valerie Becker
Kathy Booth*
Dennis Borda
Debbie Brooks
Lynn Brown*
Judy Campbell
Gail Danford
Chris Donohoo*
Renata Eskridge
Dorothy Evans
Chris Faircloth
Jill Filo
Marilyn Gill
Mary Gill
Kelly Coghan Holderbaum
Rose Housely
Cathy Hunt
Audrey Hyatt
Miriam Kahn
Winnie Kennedy
Angela Krosnick
Claudia Labbe
Chrissie McClure
Joanna Mack
Linda Mann
Jenny Miller
Jan O'Neal
Heather Otto
Melissa Pinto
Greg Putman*
James Rayburn
Jillian Sandy
Rosemary Schaeffer
Nancy Sferra
Evelyn Stiggers
Bobbi Stone
Isabel Vankos*
Terri Wallis
Reggie Watson
Chris Winters

Counties in RED have libraries who are partners in the Ohio Obituary Index.

Join Us for "Organizing Your Genealogy Research" with Kelli Bergheimer

Saturday, May 9, 10:30 am-1 pm, Main Library Auditorium

Kelli Bergheimer is a writer, teacher, editor, and national genealogical speaker. She holds an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction and an M.B.A. She is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, International Society of Genetic Genealogy, and the Genealogical Speakers Guild.

Organization and Citation for the Family Historian
Learn about genealogical citations and how to build a road map back to where you found information. Learn tips and tricks to organize your papers, photos, documents, research, DNA cousins, research trips, and digital records. Organize yourself in a way that leaves you more time for the fun stuff of genealogy—sharing, publishing, and finding even more!

Family Tree Software Options
Learn strategies to build a robust, portable, sourced, cloud-synchronized digital tree. Learn about privacy options and how to backup your tree to prevent losing everything. Learn strategies to maximize your DNA information—messaging matches, sharing trees, and how to use surname message boards. Several popular family tree software options will be discussed including Family Tree Maker software and RootsMagic.

The program is free and open to the public, and parking is free in the High-Market Parking Deck. Register online, by phone or in person. For more information, contact the Special Collections Division at 330-643-9030 or speccollections@akronlibrary.org.

New Database: America's Obituaries and Death Notices

by Barbara Leden, Librarian

Obituaries are one of the most common items requested in local history and genealogy divisions in libraries. Searching for these notices has become even easier now that you can tap into the information available on our newly added database America's Obituaries & Death Notices.

This resource is provided by NewsBank, a news database providing online archives of media publications to libraries. It's freely available in the Library and at home with a valid ASCPL card through the Library's website. It encompasses a high percentage of recent obituaries in America. From the ASCPL home page, navigate to the database section, and click on America's Obituaries and Death Notices to view current and archived notices transcribed from over 4,000 newspapers, periodicals, newswires, transcripts, business journals, government documents, and other publications. New content is added on a daily basis.

America's Obituaries and Death Notices offers several ways to search for information. The database has easy-to-use search boxes for names, dates and obituary keywords. The search engine supports wildcard and close-match searching as well as Boolean search terms. In addition, a side panel allows you to limit your search by source type, publication, state and territory, region, city, decade, year, month, day, era and presidential era. The side panel also features shortcuts to *Akron Beacon Journal* articles and current events. To the right of this

panel there's a drop-down list of U.S. states and territories which, when chosen, will show publications included for each area with date ranges listed. The interface also allows a user the ability to "click on the map" to search by region or location.

Once you find what you're looking for, you can save news articles for another session using a holding area called "My Collection." You can register for a free "My Collection" account at the login prompt at the top left of the home page. Within the article result a user can also work with the data to print, crop, save as a PDF, email, export, or create a proper citation.

If obituaries are on your research to-do list, be sure to give America's Obituaries and Death Notices a try!

We would like to thank the following for their generous contributions:

Cyndy Colley for South High School yearbook, 1950, and scrapbook of South High School articles

Carol Eubank for multiple items including various local history books, maps of Summit and Stark Counties, glass plate negatives, and novelty items from early businesses

Paul Harvey for postcard or First Second National Bank ca. 1915

Rick Kepler for *Class War: A Fable*, Book I, by Rick Kepler

Mary Lineberry for POW bracelet and photo of Richard Paul Kirn, native of Akron and distinguished Air Force Colonel in the Military Hall of Honor

Patricia T. McRowe for Citizens for Bath Seniors scrapbook, 2010-2017

Elaine Marcius for *St. Paul Parish, Akron, Ohio, Celebrating 100 Years*

Betty Mast for 1947 term paper "Evolution of the Theaters in Akron" by Luella Shaw, Dorothy Keirn, Jean Morris, and Mary Savely

Dawn Meehan for historic Barberton VHS tapes

Ohio Genealogical Society Library for North High School yearbooks, 1968, 2004, 2007, 2008

Donald Poyer for *John Marsh of Salem and his Descendants, 1633-1888* by Col. Lucius B. Marsh

Robert B. Shinafelt for *The Story of James and Elsie: Ancestors and Descendants of the Shinafelts and Knepps* by Robert B. Shinafelt

Ann S. Winland in care of Trish Saylor for various items including replica newspapers and Copley cookbooks

Rebecca Woodruff for materials about Akron German Reformed Church and digital images of items donated to the B. F. Goodrich Museum, 2013

THE M. O'NEIL CO
AKRON'S GREATEST STORE

Get Your Canoe
For Decoration Day Now

The M. O'Neil Co. is selling representative in Akron for

"Old Town Canoe

If you plan on drifting lazily about the lake or seeking shady nooks when Old Sol blazes hottest, now is the time to order your Old Town Canoe.

Prices are back to old times on Old Town Canoes.

Canoeing was a popular way to spend Decoration Day (now Memorial Day) in the 1920s. Akron Beacon Journal*, May 24, 1922.*

The Akron-Summit County Public Library
Special Collections Division
is located on the third floor
of the Main Library.

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